



Mark Van Gelder

July 3, 1920 - July 30, 2018

Mark Van Gelder, a wonderful man and good friend, passed away July 30, 2018 surrounded by his loving family. After 98 years on this Earth, Mark wanted nothing more than to live two more years to 100, but his aging body just gave out.

Mark was born in the east end of London in 1920. Being born within the sound of Bow Bells gave him the "honor" of being a Cockney. As a young man he used his athletic skills to be a top amateur soccer player and a champion flyweight boxer.

Mark served in the Second British Army from 1939 to 1945. He was part of the wave of troops which followed the initial Normandy invasion. After the war he met and ultimately married the love of his life, Frances. They were married for more than 70 years.

Mark had three things he loved more than anything: family and friends, travel, and the Arsenal Football Club of London. He was the top national sales person for Bostitch (A Division of Textron) many times up to his "retirement" at the age of 62. He then began a second career as a travel agent and worked in that field until his "real" retirement in 2011 at the age of 91.

Mark's love of soccer (football to him) resulted in being an outstanding

referee. His claim to fame was being a linesman (assistant referee) on the field for the 1967 match between Real Madrid and West Ham United of London. This was the first professional soccer match ever played indoors on a full-sized pitch. Obviously, the match was played in the Astrodome. His love of Arsenal started when he was 10 and at the time of passing he may indeed have been the oldest survivor of the largest home crowd the team had ever played.

Survived by his wife of 70 years, Frances, son Gary Van Gelder and wife Rosanne, daughter Marsha Laviage and partner Charles, Sam Laviage, grandson Randy Van Gelder and wife Amy, granddaughters, Melissa Geffs and husband Jason, Jennifer Laviage, Kelly Van Gelder and partner Lex, great grandchildren Tristan, Naomi and Oliver. Sister Anita Simmons and sister in law Anita Samson and numerous nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held on Wednesday, August 1, 2018 at 11:30 am, Congregation Beth Israel, 5600 N. Braeswood Blvd, Houston, Texas 77096. Charitable donations may be sent in Mark's name to an organization of choice.

Tribute Wall



“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with all the family.* ”

Faye and Mike Copland - August 01, 2018 at 03:24 AM